(b) The contract farming arrangements are quite helpful to the farmers in securing better remuneration for their produce, as such arrangements cover the price risk and also the production risk to a great extent. Contract Farming has the potential of combining farmers' efficiency with economy of scale, utilizing corporate management skills, providing assured markets and reducing transaction costs in the value chain by ensuring vertical integration. Such tie-ups have special significance for small and marginal farmers, who have small marketed surplus and do not have staying power. They may not individually be capable of investing in technology, but through self help groups or cooperatives, there could emerge a desirable institutional framework, through which farmers can suitably reap the benefits of contract farming arrangements. Contract farming arrangements are prevalent for the cultivation of foodgrains crops also and as such, it is not endangering the entire food security of our country.

World Development Report, 2008

786. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the failure of agriculture sector in the country has led to the dependence of the country on imports for its food security;

(b) whether the World Development Report, 2008 has also suggested that the development of agro-sector of the country is necessary for alleviating poverty from the country;

(c) if so, whether Government has taken any decision for providing easy credit facility, irrigation and post harvest management of crops to farmers;

(d) whether discussions have been held with the States in this regard; and

(e) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Total output of foodgrains during 2006-07 was a record 217.28 million MTs. There has also been an increase in the production of non-foodgrains crops including horticulture. The decision to import foodgrains from time to time is taken after taking into account the requirement of the foodgrains in the buffer stock necessary for Public Distribution System, welfare schemes run by Government, natural calamities and for food security.

(b) and (c) According to World Development Report, 2008 (World Bank), persistent concentration of poverty in rural areas in the transforming developing countries can be addressed by increasing agricultural productivity and generating rural non-farm employment. To sustain and revitalize agriculture sector, Government of India have taken several steps to increase production and productivity of major food crops. These steps, *inter-alia*, include launching of two new schemes namely, National Food Security Mission to improve production and productivity of foodgrains and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana; credit policy to increase flow of institutional credit to agriculture sector and provision of crop loan upto Rs. 3.00 lakhs to farmers at reduced interest of 7% per annum. Besides, a number of initiatives plan schemes and programmes, incldluing initiatives announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/ initiated for development of agriculture sector.

(d) and (e) Meetings and discussions with State Governments are held by the Ministry of Agriculture from time to time to obtain their feedback and suggestions as and when required.

By and large the States have responded positively to the new Schemes of National Food Security Mission and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana launched by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Development of fisheries

787. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount allocated and utilized for the development of fisheries in the country;

(b) the details thereof; State-wise;

(c) whether Government is fully utilizing the federation like FISHCOPFED; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The Central sector outlay for development of fisheries is Rs. 168.14 crore for the year 2007-08. Out of this, Rs. 147.43 crore have been utilized till 29th February 2008.

(b) The Central assistance for various schemes for development of fisheries in the country is released to the States on receipt of proposals, utilization certificate and progress report pertaining to the funds provided earlier. A Statement giving State-wise details of Central assistance released during the current financial year (till 29.2.2008) is enclosed (*See* below).

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Besides implementation of Group Accident Insurance Scheme for about 18.00 lakh fishermen annually, FISHCOPFED is also engaged in conducting training programmes for fihsermen for upgrading their capacities and skills.

Statement

State-wise Central assistance released under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the year 2007-08 (upto 29th February) for development of fisheries.

(Rs. in lakh)

Sl. No.	States	Amount released
1	2	3
1.	Andhara Pradesh	117.07
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	44.50
3.	Assam	0.00
4.	Bihar	63.58
5.	Chhattisgarh	101.80
6.	Goa	119.41
7.	Gujarat	76.09
8.	Haryana	106.50
9.	Himachal Pradesh	44.84